

This Week in Congress

August 17, 2009

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Town Halls

I continued my 2009 Annual Listening Tour with town halls in McPherson, Marion and Chase counties this week. During each town hall, I was able to visit with a large number of Kansans about their concerns with proposed health care legislation. It is important that citizens use these town halls as a part of the democratic process to voice their concerns about the discussions in Washington, D.C. To view photos from these town hall tour stops, [click here](#) .

In addition to the topic of health care reform, I had the opportunity to speak about the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF), No Child Left Behind, irresponsible government spending and my opposition to Cap and Trade legislation. I will be continuing my town halls with the following stops:

Tuesday, August 18

Morton County Tour Stop, Elkhart

Time: 7:30 to 8:30 AM

Location: Morton County Civic Center

Address: 400 E. Orchard

Stevens County Tour Stop, Hugoton

Time: 9:15 to 10:15 AM

Location: Common Grounds

Address: 531 S. Main Street

Seward County Tour Stop, Liberal

Time: 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Location: Chamber of Commerce

Address: 4 Rock Island Road

Saturday, August 29

Smith County Tour Stop, Smith Center

Time: 2:15 to 3:15 PM

Location: Smith County Memorial Hospital, Conference Room

Address: 614 S. Main Street

Jewell County Tour Stop, Mankato

Time: 4:00 to 5:00 PM

Location: Mankato Community Building

Address: 214 N. High Street

[Click here](#) to view the complete listening tour schedule and my upcoming town hall stops.

Meeting with Hospital CEOs from Wheat Plains Network and Sunflower Health Network

On Saturday, I met with hospital CEOs from Wheat Plains Network and Sunflower Health Network. As Chair of the House Rural Health Care Coalition, it is important the priorities of rural communities be identified and sufficiently addressed in any health care legislation. I discussed my opposition to the recently proposed health care legislation and reasons the bill falls short on resolving the access issues of rural America. This access crisis exists because of a medical workforce shortage and unequal rural Medicare reimbursements.

Also during our discussion, we talked about the 340B Drug Pricing Program, challenges faced by rural medical facilities, the Rural Community Hospital Demonstration Program and the importance of Medicaid. It was a good opportunity to talk with health leaders about the rising health care concerns in Kansas.

Thanks to: Bryant Anderson of Anthony, CEO of Anthony Medical Center; Jeremy Armstrong of Marion, CEO of St. Luke Hospital and Living Center; Tom Bell of Topeka, CEO of Kansas Hospital Association; Ron Bender of Clay Center, CEO of Clay County Medical Center; Jim Chromik of McPherson, CEO of Memorial Hospital; Dee Dee Dewell of Wichita, Assistant Network Administrator for Wheat Plains Health Network; Marty Ekrem of Wichita, Network Administrator for Wheat Plains Health Network and President of Via Christi Solutions; Heather Fuller of Salina, Executive Director for Sunflower Health Network; Charlie Grimwood of Salina, Vice President of Regional Development, Salina Regional Health Center; Carolyn Hess of Smith Center, Administrator for Smith County Memorial Hospital; Greg Lundstrom of Lindsborg, President of Rural Health Insights; Roger Masse of Ellsworth, CEO of Ellsworth County Medical Center; Doyle McKimmy of Jewell, CEO Jewell County Hospital; Blaine Miller of Belleville, Administrator for Republic County Hospital; Mark Miller of Abilene, CEO of Memorial Health System; Gary Tiller of Kingman, Administrator for Kingman Community Hospital; Larry Van Der Wege of Lindsborg, CEO of Lindsborg Community Hospital; Dick Vaught of Winfield, CEP of William Newton Memorial Hospital; and Virgil Watson of Caldwell, CEO of Sumner County District #1 Hospital.

Speaking with Wichita Independent Business Association

On Tuesday, I visited Wichita to speak with members of the Wichita Independent Business Association (WIBA). WIBA is made up of associations of privately owned businesses throughout the state of Kansas. It has more than 1,300 business members representing approximately 250 industries. Small businesses are the backbone of the Kansas economy. Congress must recognize the challenges of running a business as it considers health care reform. I spoke to WIBA members about the steps we can take to address medical costs, including changing malpractice rules and improving medical records to avoid redundant medical tests. Thank you to Tim Witsman, WIBA President, for inviting me to speak at the event.

Attending Kansas Annual Farm Bureau Meetings

Franklin County Annual Farm Bureau Meeting: On Tuesday, I visited Ottawa to speak at the Franklin County Annual Farm Bureau meeting. It was good to speak with farmers and ranchers about agriculture issues being discussed in Congress. As a senior member of the House Agriculture Committee, I find it valuable to talk with Kansans in agriculture about issues concerning their livelihood. During the meeting, I discussed my strong opposition both to the recently passed Cap and Trade legislation and to the Food Safety bill. I appreciated the hospitality of the group, including Linda Saueressig.

Morris County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting: On Thursday, I attended the Morris County

Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in Council Grove. During the meeting I talked about specific issues including: my opposition to Cap and Trade legislation, Food Safety legislation and new environmental regulations. I will continue to work hard to represent Kansas producers so that we can provide the next generation of farmers an opportunity to experience the way of life we enjoy. Thank you to those members who attended the meeting and to Don Day for inviting me to speak.

Spending Time at the Flint Hills Beef Fest in Emporia

On Friday morning, I attended the Flint Hills Beef Fest at the Lyon County Fairgrounds in Emporia. I spoke to cattlemen during WIBW Radio's Ag Issues Seminar about issues affecting the beef industry. I told beef producers that as an important livestock state, whatever happens with livestock affects our economy and the pocketbooks of Kansans across the state. I also discussed the 2008 Farm Bill.

Also during the event, I talked about regulations on farmers and ranchers, my opposition to Cap and Trade legislation, irresponsible government spending and my opposition to the current health care reform legislation. Thanks to Kelly Lenz for inviting me to speak at the event.

Attending Northeast Kansas Field Day

On Friday, I attended the Fifth Annual Northeast Kansas Roundup Corn & Soybean Field Day near Horton. The event was hosted by Kansas State University State Research and Extension and held at Olsen Farms. I observed seed plots representing 20 different seed companies. During the event, I visited with farmers about issues affecting their livelihood. Thanks to Commissioner Keith Olsen for inviting me to attend.

In the Office

Several Kansans visited my Washington, D.C., office to receive a tour of the United States Capitol, including Larry and Wilma Jean Nelson of Chanute; Chance and Cole Nelson of Stillwell; Bruce, Robert and Kelli Giessel of Dodge City; and Lydia and Melanie Peele of Olathe. In from McPherson were Michael and Ruby Holy and Scot, Jenny and Ethan Loyd. Also in for a tour from Hays were Dean and Arlene Denning; Travis, Jennifer, Maggie and Jesse Taggart; and Charles and Max Stieben.

Very truly yours,

Jerry

